

Submitter: Helen Bellanca

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3580

Dear Co-chair Helm, Co-chair Owens, and members of the committee,

I am writing to ask that you please support HB 3580 to establish a task force for eelgrass meadows.

Oregon's underwater eelgrass meadows are a unique and important part of the coastal ecosystem. They are a nursery habitat to many juvenile fish species including salmon, herring, and shellfish species that are so important for our coastal economy. They also support migratory birds who feed on it. Eelgrass meadows are an important buffer against climate change because they can sequester carbon faster than many terrestrial habitats, all while improving water quality. However eelgrass meadows are declining and we currently don't know why. This bill pulls together state agencies, Tribes, scientists, and local communities to better understand the problem and work toward solutions.

Please support this bill and protect this important part of Oregon's beautiful coast.

Sincerely,
Helen Bellanca